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ABSTRACT

To be maximally effective in solving problems, researchers must place their methodological and theoretical models of science within social and political contexts. They must become aware of biases and assumptions and move toward a more valid perception of social realities. Psychologists must view women in the situational context within which behaviors happen, and must avoid the sexist viewpoints which have been traditional in American culture. This paper discusses the scientific method in terms of the social and political contexts of our culture and suggests five critical areas which behaviorists must analyze as they develop programs for minorities. These areas are: (1) formulation of the problem; (2) operationalization of the program/research; (3) consideration (or lack of consideration) of the social-political context in which women behave; (4) experimenter bias; and (5) analysis and inference. A case study of the Juniper Gardens Children's Project from 1979 to 1982 is presented. (Author/VM)

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Behavioral Methodology for Designing and Evaluating Applied Programs for Women

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ABSTRACT

Behavioral Methodology for Designing and Evaluating
Applied Programs for Women

Linda P. Thurston, Ph.D.

To be maximally effective in solving problems, researchers must place their methodological and theoretical models of science within social and political contexts. They must become aware of the biases and assumptions in their science and in theirselves and move toward a valid perspectve of social reality. What needs to happen is for psychologists to view women in the situational contexts within which their behavior takes place and avoid the sexist viewpoint of our culture which until recently considered women's problems unimportant.

This paper does not attempt to review specific methods or suggest new, specialized methods for designing and evaluating applied behavior analysis programs for women. Rather, this paper will discuss the scientific method in terms of the social and political contexts of our culture, and suggest five critical areas of self-analysis for behaviorists who develop programs for minorities; these critical areas are: 1) formulation of the problem; 2) operationalization of the program/research; 3) consideraton (or lack of consideration) of the social-political context in which women behave, 4) experimenter bias, and 5) analysis and inference. Offered as a case study, using these five areas of self-analysis, is the methodology for the design developed at Juniper Gardens Children's Project from 1979 to 1982.

Introduction

It is widely recognized that it is impossible to select research problems or to conduct research in a vacuum, unaffected by social, political, and professional concerns (Dobash & Dobash, 1981). To be maximally effective in solving problems, in producing research that has "applications rather than implications" (Azrin, 1977), researchers must place their methodological and theoretical models of science within their social and political contexts. To accomplish a truly scientific, a truly applied enterprise, we must have a science "that is relevant to women as well as to men, that employs methodology appropriate, meaningful, and congruent with the lives of women as well as men; that develops theories that predict female as well as male behavior, that studies questions of interest to women as well as to men." (Vaughter, 1976, pg. 120).

Feminist analysts of psychological theory, research and therapeutic interventions are severe in their criticisms (Vaughter, 1976; Tennov, 1976; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Frieze, Parsons, Johnson, Ruble, Zellman, 1978; Weitz, 1977). Weisstein (1971), in her article "Psychology constructs the female, or: the fantasy life of the male psychologist", asserts "that psychologists and psychiatrists embrace sexist norms of our culture, that they do not see beyond the most superficial and stultifying conceptions of female nature, and that their ideas of female nature serve industry and commerce so well." In 1971, an article in the APA Monitor quoted Dr. Joan Berman of the Illinois Department of Mental Health as reporting "psychology is part of the problem in perpetuating the oppression of people." A major

criticism of psychological research and practice is that practitioners fail to take into account the social-political perspective of the issues they examine. What needs to happen is for psychologists to toss off our blinders, get women out of the pink box and into the situational contexts within which behavior takes place.

Vaughter, in her review of psychology in SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society (1976), compliments behaviorism because it considers context in its theory and methodology and "encourages us to believe woman is sane not crazy; that she is bright and reasonable, not hysterical; and that ill-advised behavioral patterns may not be ill at all, given the nature of the environment in which her behaviors take place." (p. 144).

The scientific research model of behavior analysis and the application of the principles of operant psychology to practical problems have a tradition of objectivity, quantification, specification of procedures, experimental evaluation, and the primacy of data over speculation (Azrin, 1977). In applying this methodology to practical problems, the major concern is applications rather than implications and this means that our research strategy must be outcome oriented, consumer directed, and problem oriented rather than method oriented (Azrin, 1977).

This paper does not attempt to review specific methods or suggest new, specialized methods for designing and evaluating applied behavior analysis programs for women. Rather, this paper will discuss our scientific method in terms of a broader perspective of social and political context of our culture and the egalitarian nature of our

science. This paper will suggest five critical areas of self-analysis for behaviorists as we develop programs for minority members of the culture and will offer as a case study the methodology for the design and evaluation of a program called Survival Skills for Urban Women which was developed at Juniper Gardens Children's Project from 1979 to 1982.

Cautions in Designing and Evaluating Applied Programs for Women

> We are like the fish who is unaware that its environment is wet. After all, what else could it be? Such is the nature of all non-conscious ideologies. Such is the nature of America's ideology about women. (Bem & Bem, 1970)

A nonconscious ideology is a set of beliefs and stereotypes of which one is unaware because of a failure to imagine any alternatives. Research psychologists share the nonconscious ideologies our society holds about women, and these ideologies are incorporated into the research they perform (Frieze, et al., 1978). When stereotypes are incorporated into theories and methodologies, the implications are far-reaching. The rules, regulations, and traditions that are influenced by research can be insidious. Such traditions include male researchers studying male subjects, the focus on biological determinants of behavior, ignoring the social realities of the world in which women exist, and the abuse of mothers as a dominant theme in the developmental literature (Lightfoot, 1978).

This paper addresses five specific areas of concern in designing and evaluating applied behavior analysis programs for women. These areas are: (1) formulation of the problem; (2) operationalization of the program/research; (3) consideration (or lack of consideration)

of the social-political context in which women behave; (4) experimenter bias; and (5) analysis and inference. Each of these categories will be discussed briefly; then the design and evaluation of an applied behavior analysis program for low-income urban women will be presented along with the approaches the program developers used to address these five areas of concern.

Formulation of the Problem

The questions that psychologists have selected for investigations reflect the interests, values, and concerns of the researchers. Therefore, the problems that we try to solve are issues that are perceived as problems by white, middle-class males. Also significant is the fact that passers of legislation, writers of RFP's, decision-makers about public and private funding are also primarily white, middle class, and male. Studies about decision-making, for example, are conceptualized in terms of decision-making in the male world, like clinical judgements or international relations. There are relatively few studies of family decision making. Women, their traditional roles, and the issues about which they are concerned have generally not been considered important until the last few years. Examples are love, empathy, nurturance, birth control, helping, female sexuality (Frieze, et al., 1978). Similarily, researchers who study "women's issues" have typically been considered second-rate as a result of these biases (Bart, 1971).

Applied behavior analysis emphasizes socially relevant problems (Wolf, 1978). Miller and Miller (1970) assert that behavior analysis must reject approaches to problems that are based solely on changing behavior to conform to existing institutions and consider changing

existing institutions and even inventing new institutions. George Albee (1982) would agree with this, I think, because he says, "The problem is the system, not the victim."

Traditional notions that social issues are individual problems (as opposed to a complex individual, social, institutional, and cultural one) related simply to personalities, upbringing, or biology, and that the problem will be solved through individual therapeutic means is a message that fits the system and requires no real change or challenge to it. Concentrating solely on the behavior of the "victim" leads to ignoring the relevant social and political contexts which are an intimate part of the problem to be solved. This will be discussed further in a later section of this paper.

Vaughter (1976) suggests a solution to the dilemma of formulation of the problem would be to engage the constituents of science (the public) and the participants in the research (the subjects) in the scientific enterprise, and to consider what kinds of programs women consider will advance the status of women and will add to the quality of their lives. And I think that when we behaviorists found our collective heart and began soliciting subjective feedback (which we called social validity) (Wolf, 1978), we took a step towards solving this dilemma within our own field.

Operationalization of the Program/Research

Confronted with a problem for study, we first look to the literature to see if a solution already exists, and in the past, according to Azrin (1977), "our ability to talk about, and to explain problems greatly exceeded our ability to show we could cure them." Psychology

employs several methodologies to answer questions about human behavior (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). Each of these methodologies is subject to built-in biases and Paula Johnson (Frieze et al., 1978) lists some common errors which reflect and result in biases such as use of only male (or female) subjects, not testing for sex differences, exclusive use of male experimenters, and incorporating the value system into the measures and treatment procedures. To this list, reviewers of the behavioral literature (Blechman, 1980; Bernstein, 1982; Wooley, Wooley, & Dyrenforth, 1979) add the ignored dimension of social context or natural ecological systems which is a recurrent theme in this paper and will be discussed later as caution number three.

The methods of research we use include the selection of subjects, the choice of the dependent and independent variables, the selection of measures and experimental designs. These methods, according to Lightfoot (1978) are consonant with the preservation of our American dream, the myth of equality of opportunity for all, and the measures we choose are too often based on abstract categories related to preconceived or irrelevant issues (Dobash & Dobash, 1980) such as analyzing parenting or adolescent eating habits in the treatment of obesity (Blechman, 1980). In measuring dependent variables, studies in the past have utilized contexts and tasks biased so each sex may respond differently. Math story problems in studies of achievement and academic behaviors, and tasks in conformity studies are sex-biased when they include male versus female related topics.

Let us consider independent variables or treatment procedures. We must challenge the scientific and social appropriateness of treatment or intervention programs which "infantalize" patients through

application of exclusively external controls and contingencies or which "blame the victim" by concentrating on modifying the traits or behaviors of the victim. These programs imply that the victim is the cause of her own victimization. For example, programs for rape prevention and interventions for battered women have tended to concentrate on the victim rather than on the violent men and the wider social context in which the problem occurs.

Paternalistic treatment is any treatment or intervention in which an individual can rely on others to resume responsibility for his/her problems, is not expected to be able to cope with frequently occuring and stressful events, and is given little opportunity to take risks and to perfect instrumental attitudes and behaviors (Blechman, 1980). Paternalistic treatment robs the recipient of opportunities to acquire the skills needed to avoid reliance upon paternalisitic treatment in the future. Although it protects the recipient from total disaster, it tends to create as many problems as it resolves. The recipient is reinforced for his/her helplessness and the helper has his/her confidence and problem-solving skills enhanced (Rachman, 1979; Zajonc & Markum, 1975).

Besides paternalism and infantalism in considering the independent variables in our programs, we must consider the ethical and moral dimensions of the procedures we develop. Wooley and her colleagues (Wooley, et al., 1979) give us the example of behavioral treatment programs for obesity which include elements designed to increase the shame over obesity, as by teaching patients to rehearse the ideas that fat is ugly and slenderness attractive. There is no evidence to show that fostering shame has any benefit to the patient. We can only hope that

this treatment procedure was in no way related to the fact that the major consumers of weight-loss programs are women (Blechman, 1980).

In selecting the dependent variables for our programs for women, we must be concerned with the context in which we expect behaviors to occur as a result of our procedures. Competing variables in natural ecosystems often account for program failures (Holman, 1977), and Bernstein (1982) warns that we must analyze the ecology of the client's social system to determine whether it will facilitate or inhibit the use of the new skills.

Finally, in considering the behaviors our programs are designed to change, when they are the behaviors of the clients, Dorothy Tennov, in her book Psychotherapy, The Hazardous Cure, warns that one reason behavior change programs (psychotherapy, specifically) may be hazardous to women, is what she calls "consequence dissonance". This means that in the environment in which the client operates, reinforcement contingencies conflict with one another so the same behavior is both punished and reinforced. It is also when two incompatible behaviors are both reinforced, or when a behavior that would destroy the person's chance at a large but delayed reinforcer is given immediate reinforcement. Examples she gives of "consequence dissonance" are welfare systems that punish recipients for working by reducing payments so greatly that total income is less than if the person were not employed; and evaluation systems that operate on a zero-sum manner in which individuals gain equally by causing another's performance to be devalued or their own to be valued more highly.

Involving the patient/client/consumer in selecting the treatment goal and assessing the social significance of goals, the social appro-

priateness of procedures, and the social importance of effects (Wolf, 1977) are procedures for avoiding paternalistic and unethical treatment procedures in behavioral programs for women. In building his case for social validity of behavioral programs, Wolf (1977) puts these words in the mouths of professional imperialists: "Of course they like it, we're doing it for their own good, aren't we? And even if they don't like, we know what is best for them." (p. 206).

Consideration of Social-Political Context

In formulating problems, in utilizing current methodology, in developing interventions and treatments, consideration of the political-social ecology in which women function is a neglected area of program design and evaluation. The social context in which research is conducted and interpreted has largely been ignored in traditional psychological models. There is a need to include in research the descriptions and analyses of the situational contexts and the environment which impact on the problem being studied and on its solution.

Psychologists, like other scientists, tend to pride themselves on the objectivity of their investigations and on attempts to build value-free theoretical models and therapeutic and educational programs, driven by empirical data rather than personal beliefs and prejudices. However, research is intimately connected to social and political theories of the day. For example, much of the research regarding sex differences has been guided by conventions of the time (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). As the women's movement began to challenge the political and social institutions of the day, research psychologists began to reappraise the accepted premises about the bi-polarity of masculinity and femininity. Recent research has shown that such things as sex-

specific child-rearing practices, and the nature and severity of sex-role differentiation imposed by society can be shown to be related to political, sociological and economic forces (Weitz, 1977). For example, Barry, Bacon, and Child (1957) found that magnitude of sex differences in socialization practices were related to society's demand for superior strength (as opposed to biological or innate factors alone). Another study (Haavio-Mannila, 1975) suggests that magnitude of sex-role differentiation is related to participation in the labor force, which is related to the rate of industrialization.

The American dream of equality of opportunity and equal access to reinforcers is a myth that is easily perpetuated by the programs we develop and the research we carry out. According to Tennov (1976), fewer reinforcements are available for women and for members of minority groups than for white males. Sex stereotyping and discrimination produce environmental nonresponsiveness or punitive response. Victims of prejudice may be ignored or punished for behaviors that would be rewarded if emitted by more culturally favored persons (Tennov, 1976).

There are cultural and social pressures to behave in certain ways and those pressures (reinforcers and punishers) are discrepant for males and females. Anatomical sex creates separate and unequal social ecologies for men and for women. Cultural stereotypes of women as recipients of custodial care, combined with the paternalistic settings in which many women function (marriage, welfare dependence, institutionalization, psychotherapy) provide a powerful set of ecological variables that must be considered in designing and implementing behavioral programs for women.

This separate and unequal ecology for women promotes women's poor mental health and impedes the effectiveness of any educational/therapeutic programs designed for them. Behavioral treatment literature has largely ignored the ecological sources of dysfunction in women (Blechman, 1980). Many life problems arise from women's social and political conditions which in turn effect their unequal position in the job market with concomitant low job status and low pay, and their overrepresentation among seekers of mental health treatment. In addition, paternalistic settings (and paternalistic intervention programs) block opportunities to acquire skills and increase the incidence of such problems as social isolation and financial pressure which, in turn, increase the likelihood of reliance on paternalistic systems and settings (Blechman, 1980).

Therefore, to be ecologically valid and genuinely effective, behavioral programs for women must consider the social and political context in which our culture functions.

Experimenter Bias

The influence of experimenter bias has a significant effect on the construction of their experiments and research, and consequently on the results received and perceived (Lightfoot, 1978). Incorporation of nonconscious bias (like the fish who was unaware that its environment was wet) into research is antithetical to empiricism's basic job. Because of this nonconscious bias against women, male behavior has been considered as normative, and women have not been studied because women generally were considered not important (Frieze, et al., 1978). When they did begin to study sex differences, it was often to support researchers' position that such differences were innate.

Dobash and Dobash (1982) relate three problems within the area of experimenter bias which effect programs for women: overly simplistic and unquestioning "value free" stance of empiricism (usually this means that research related to social action was illegitimate); popularity of research that had little concrete application; and, a myopic vision of women.

Going beyond our own nonconscious ideologies is difficult. Until the classic study by the Bovermans and their colleagues (1970) psychologists were unaware that their own criteria for "good mental health" varied enormously between male and female clients. Research in elementary school classrooms shows that even teachers who profess to treat boys and girls equally provide different educational opportunities and consequences to boys and girls in their classrooms (Harrison, 1974; Guttentag & Bray, 1976).

The solution to the experimenter bias problem in research, and the program developer bias problem in applied behavior analysis programs is complex. Resocialization of behavior analysts is one suggestion. Those of us who teach and who assist graduate students in learning our trade have the opportunity of modeling unbiased methodology. But who controls our behavior? The constituencies of our programs, if we are brave enough to include them in our program development, can provide valuable feedback about the real world and the effects of our programs. In addition, I suggest that those who control the reinforcers for researchers - peers, editors, funders - can be powerful in shaping our behavior into examining the problems we seek to correct from a non-biased perspective.

Analysis and Inference

Once the data are gathered, there are more biases that can enter into the interpretation of the results and the inferences that may be drawn from the results. In analyzing the effects of programs, and the results of research, it is important to consider the effects of sex, the long-term effects of program participation on the social-political context in which they will function when the program is over, and to be committed to outcome, rather than method (Azrin, 1977). The outcome dimensions that Azrin (1977) would have us consider, and which also help us avoid the five pitfalls outlined in this paper, are speed of the effect, percentage of people benefited, degree of benefit, cost, durability over time, and social acceptability (or consumer acceptability and population generality).

The greatest problem is making inferences from data in the generalization from men to women, or from one subset of women to another. It also would serve us well to consider the relationship of our work to public policy decisions. If our data are not representative of the status quo, it is vital to present the alternative message in public arenas and to assure that our study of a social problem provides a contribution to the changes necessary for solutions to those problems. Because of resistance to change, social scientists may be punished for entering the political world of ongoing social change. Yet social science is lacking in models of how to develop scientific work within this context, how to analyze the social and political consequences of the messages inherent in research, and how to participate with community groups and social agencies in the collective creation of social change (Dobash & Dobash, 1981).

Some suggestions are offered by Jill Kneerim and Janet Shur in The Exchange Report, a one-time publication on women and development issues for the 1980's, published by the International Exchange of Developmental Resources (International Supplement to the Women's Studies Quarterly, 1982). They suggest that since policy planning is a political process and politicians are responsive to a constituency, research findings should be taken to the people. They also suggest communicating findings to other researchers, putting dissemination into finding plans, making sure government data collection systems collect data about women and assisting organizations that monitor for policies that run counter to research findings.

Survival Skills for Urban Women, A Case Study

Because of the social-political context in which women function, they are likely to confront more events which require intelligent and persistent problem-solving behavior during their lifetimes than men. Paternalistic treatment by mental health providers, medical personnel, and government agencies interfere with the acquisition or practice of problem-solving skills. Women, therefore, acquire and maintain fewer of the behaviors necessary to solve problems and to become independent. These are steps in a vicious cycle which perpetuates helplessness and dependence in women. Blechman (1980) labels these steps in the cycle as "error-enhancing feedback loops". Women's social-political ecology provides little opportunity to learn skills which promote independence; they encounter frustrating circumstances and additional programs are generated; poorly resolved problems make her more likely to be a recipient of paternalistic treatment; and troubled women will be cared for and will survive to seek help again. Blechman (1980) has developed

three recommendations which emerge from her social ecology model of dysfunction in women: highly structured treatment; focus on transmission of instrumental behavior; and, attention to who is employed as natural caregivers for women seeking help.

These suggestions augment and emphasize the recommendations listed earlier. This paper will now describe a behavioral program for women which was developed as a non-paternalistic, outcome-oriented, and consumer-oriented program to teach basic survival skills to low-income, urban women. The basic tenents of the program are: first, that survival skills can be identified and learned; second, that peer reinforcement in terms of support groups is a device for establishing reinforcement for the application of survival skills; and third, that generalization and maintenance of survival skills must be actively programmed and supported by peer group reinforcement if socially significant effects for women are to be produced.

The purpose of Survival Skills for Urban Women was to develop a program for urban women that would be effective in combating the immediate and long term effects of isolation and helplessness related to economic, educational, and political institutions. Based upon a behavioral approach, the project was developed over a three-year period and produced an intensive intervention program that involves a three-component attack: (1) a model for establishing local community women's support groups; (2) a curriculum to train urban women in critical life survival skills that are immediately useful in their attempts to master barriers and control their own lives in the urban setting; and (3) a service delivery system to enable practical and

cost effective use of the program by community action groups, social service agencies, churches, and other neighborhood groups.

This paper will briefly describe the methods utilized by this project during its development and evaluation phases to assure the five caution areas issued earlier in this paper would be avoided.

Formulation of the Problem

During the 1970's, the people working at the Juniper Gardens Learning Center were designing and implementing educational programs for young inner-city children and their parents. We came face to face with the real problems of those families - survival. As we worked with mothers of handicapped children on self-help skills, they asked us about stretching their welfare check to the end of the month. As we worked on incidental teaching in the home, mothers asked about finishing a GED or getting into job training. As we worked on getting medical evaluations for their failure-to-thrive infants, mothers wanted to know how to avoid getting thrown out of their homes or how to keep the gas from being turned off, or how to stand up for themselves in small claims court.

We developed a program concept from the problems encountered by the women with whom we worked. Those problems were reiterated by the women on the staff. They were emphasized in surveys and examinations of the documents about the cycle of poverty and variables that predicted success in educational and employment settings.

We wrote a grant and it was funded by the Office of Human Development Services. We involved constituents of the program by developing an Advisory Board which included program recipients, service providers such as the Rehabilitation Institute, CETA, WIN, and city government,

and non-research advocates for women such as the YWCA, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the National Organization for Women. Our staff included women with degrees and without degrees. It included black women and white women. It even included a couple of men. And, the women on the staff were "survivors"; displaced homemakers, women who had been on welfare, women who had faced many of the problems faced by the women for whom the program would be designed.

Collectively, the staff and the Advisory Board and the women who were participants in the program as it was developed overcame, ignored, or were unaware of the assumptions generally held about women and their problems and the causes of their problems, and worked together to develop a program that worked, that wouldn't waste anybody's time, that would foster independence rather than dependence, that would get women working and talking together, that would provide a forum for women to learn problem-solving skills and other skills instrumental for personal and economic independence.

Operationalization of the Program

The first year of the project was devoted to developing the curriculum, that is, the content and procedures for each topic area to be taught. Ten topics represented the content areas that were developed from the research, discussion, and experience mentioned above. The topics are: assertiveness, personal health, nutrition and meal planning, money management, child management, self-advocacy and goal setting, legal rights, coping with crisis, utilizing community resources, and employment/education or re-entry.

After the topics were chosen, each area team met with "experts" and "survivors", researched the topic, examined other pertinent training

materials, and selected specific areas of emphasis within the broad topic. Each team developed a statement of purpose with instructional objectives and expected outcomes for each area.

Training procedures for teaching the skills for each area were developed within an emphasis on providing an opportunity for maximum responding by participants in each workshop (to assure learning), on promoting participant interaction (to increase supportiveness), and on increasing independence from the trainer (to increase supportiveness and independence). Criteria were established by staff for the development of workshops. Then area authors developed the handouts, flip charts, unit tests, learning activities, and training procedures for each workshop. A dialogue was written for the trainer which contained cues and prompts to aid her in carrying out the activities in each workshop and a checklist was developed which included the trainer behaviors for each workshop, such as administer pretest, walk among participants, praise answers, etc. Each workshop was developed with these details to assure the replicability of the program across trainers and settings.

After these initial development procedures, a member of the unit team "gave" the workshop to other staff members and volunteers from the community. This activity was called a "mockshop" and the feedback was detailed and often severe. Workshops were then revised or, in some cases, completely rewritten. This process was continued until each mockshop met the approval of the staff. Then the first series of workshops was given to "real" people, staff and parents of children at a nearby day care center and preschool. There was a debriefing and consumer satisfaction rating after each workshop and we decided that if

a workshop rated low, if the participants didn't learn anything, according to the unit test and other measures, and/or if the workshop participants got up and left in the middle of the workshop or fell asleep, we needed to start over.

Our next revisions were implemented at a GED center. Using the checklist, each workshop was monitored by an observer who noted when the trainer followed the workshop procedures and noted what changes were needed in content, training procedures, and materials. Evaluations of skill acquisition and generalization, social interaction, and consumer and trainer satisfaction were used to make revisions in the workshops. Figure 1 outlines this developmental process.

Figures 1 & 2 about here

The second phase of development (see Figure 2) included replication of the workshop series with six different groups. An evaluation component which measured program effects on attendance, participation, skill acquisition, generalization, and social interaction was also part of this phase. These measures were repeated at each workshop for each group, and pre- and post-series data were taken on survival skill concept knowledge, generalized urban living skills, self-concept, demographic variables, and consumer and trainer satisfaction. These data were the basis of further revisions in the workshop materials and procedures.

To reduce immediate social isolation and emphasize opportunities for the development of support networks and linkages to social, educational, and economic institutions of women within local communities,

programmed peer support was developed as part of the program. The effects of support group networking (reducing social isolation) were evaluated by social interaction measures designed to access social interactions during workshop sessions. These were observational measures of the frequencies, duration, and content of reciprocal interaction with project staff and peer members. Increase and improvement in peer-peer social interaction and decrease of trainer-centered behaviors were a major variable of this project.

Research measures were designed to assess the quality of training delivered by the trainer. These were particularly important in ascertaining the problems of the program. Problems could occur due to: 1) inadequate delivery and follow through on the part of the trainer, or 2) problems related to the unit materials, not involving the trainer. Thus the following measures were developed: 1) The Checklist of Standard Lesson Activities completion which is used by the trainer and an outside observer to demonstrate that all aspects of the workshop were implemented as per the program; 2) the observational measure of trainer approval and reinforcement which serves to assist each trainer become more aware of her social behavior and its use in motivating her trainees; and 3) the trainer's Satisfaction Report - a standard indication of her satisfaction with each lesson taught and suggested improvements that need to be made. These measures provide feedback to project staff on the salient variables related to the performance and satisfaction of the trainer's role.

Finally, we were concerned about the paternalistic nature of our program - who is the expert in survival skills. It was important to develop a non-paternalistic model of problem-solving, helping, training.

So, in Survival Skills for Urban Women, the experts are the workshop participants. They are group leaders in activities, they answer questions and solve problems asked of the trainer, they even teach each other successful childrearing methods (called "Experience Speaks" in the Child Management workshop). The trainer is not set up as an expert, she is not a "professional". She's not even called a trainer, counselor, or leader. She is a peer of the women in her group. She's called a Community Facilitator, or CF. She serves as a survivor "model" to the others in the group.

Consideration of Social-Political Context

Although the format of each workshop is highly-structured, individualization in Survival Skills Workshops is a key to promoting generalization and assuring adaptation of survival concepts to each participant's environment. The curriculum contains examples that were gleaned from discussion and feedback in the initial workshops and for each major skill or concept, workshop participants discuss, role-play, or plan application of the skill or concept to their individual situations. For example, participants role-play being assertive in situations they specify, and in the community resources workshop, each participant works with a team in an area she chooses to discover more resources in her community.

At the end of each workshop, women in the workshops plan a Practice Project, an activity they work on during the week until the next workshop, which applies one of the skills or concepts taught during the workshop to problems or situations in their own lives. Another activity which promotes generalization and prompts peer support for new skills is Survival Stores, a "bring and brag" activity at the beginning of

each workshop, starting with the third, during which participants report use of survival skills in their lives and show evidence of their success. Examples are notes to or from a child's school (for assertiveness or child management), an unopened pack of cigarettes (for personal health), a letter regarding a credit check (money management or legal rights).

Experimenter Bias

Bias in the development and evaluation of Survival Skills for Urban Women has been kept minimal because of the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints of the staff and the Advisory Board. The measures we used were directly related to the behaviors of the workshop participants.

Analysis and Inference

Analyzing the effects of Survival Skills for Urban Women has focused on the short term effects of the program, on the behavior of workshop participants, and on the long term effects on their independence (as measured by demographic variables). We do not generalize program effects to men. In fact, we are often asked about including men in our workshops. We must reply that we don't know if it works with men, but we suspect it doesn't because the world in which men function operates differently on their behavior than it does on women's behavior. We do not generalize our results to other women than those groups for which the workshops have been successful, namely, Head Start mothers, single, teenaged mothers, ex-offenders, mothers of handicapped children, displaced homemakers, GED students, and community college students.

We have made some specific steps in involving and educating the community about Survival Skills for Urban Women and its results. In this era when it seems racism and sexism and a blame-the-victim mentality are all socially accepted, it is important to demonstrate that survival skills are "learnable", that women want to participate in programs that are designed to promote their independence, that when women get together and start talking together things happen. We have had radio and television and print media coverage and whenever possible we include program "graduates" in our presentations.

In considering the suggestions of Dobash and Dobash (1981), this program presents a model for developing scientific work within a social-political context. It was concerned with the social and political consequences of its results, and it promotes the collectivity of community groups and social agencies in helping urban women control the contingencies in their own environments.

Finally, this program was developed with independent replication as its final goal. To assure replicability by social agencies, community groups, and civic groups, program delivery was specified and tested through replication research. The program was developed to be materials dependent rather than person dependent and as a result, program effects have been replicated in a variety of groups with a variety of CF's. Professional credentials of CF's range from Ph.D. (1) to GED (2), and graduates of the program have served as CF's for other groups. CF's have been program developers and staff members, volunteers and agency staff members trained by project staff, and one of our best groups was CF'ed by a woman who picked up the materials and led the workshops with no training or prior experience with the program.

Replicability in these groups was measured by the participant outcome and procedural reliability of CF behaviors with training materials.

Conclusions

As behaviorists develop programs and conduct research that impact on public policy, as we change existing institutions or empower constituents to promote change, as we approach socially relevant conditions that cause and maintain dependency, helplessness, poverty, we begin to go beyond freedom and dignity to a non-punitive society which assures equality of opportunities and reinforcers for all.

Psychologists must realize that ivory towers are not irrelevant and irresponsive to social concerns. Psychology has an embarrassing history of involvement in reflecting the status quo, rather than searching for an unbiased truth. One example of how findings and the influence of stereotypes affect lives is in governmental policy. In World War I, psychologists developed and used intelligence tests to prove racial superiority. Psychological studies have been used to support eugenics legislation and restrictive immigration policies (Albee, 1982). Data and assumptions about women were part of the U.S. Senate discussions of the Equal Rights Amendment, and, more recently, were used in Kansas to support paternal child custody and mandatory joint custody.

Naomi Gottlieb, in her edited book Alternative Social Services for Women 1980), recognizes the fact that being a woman in a sexist society is a contributing and complicating element in need for services. She suggests three major dimensions to which "helpers" need to be attuned: (1) the pervasiveness of sexism and the extent to which sexual stereotypes, conditioning, and discrimination affect the individual woman;

(2) the specific ways in which sexism is manifested in the helping professions; and (3) specific, practical programs and methods to serve particular women - ways that can be used to solve problems, change situations, improve lives. These suggestions summarize the more specific suggestions in this paper for designing and evaluating behavioral programs for women.

Methodological issues in program development are important for several reasons. We must strive to become aware of the biases and assumptions in our science and in ourselves and move toward a valid perspective of social reality. The results of our work profoundly effect people's lives. We must assure that that effect is a positive one.

DEVELOPMENT PHASE I

7/1/80 THROUGH 6/30/81

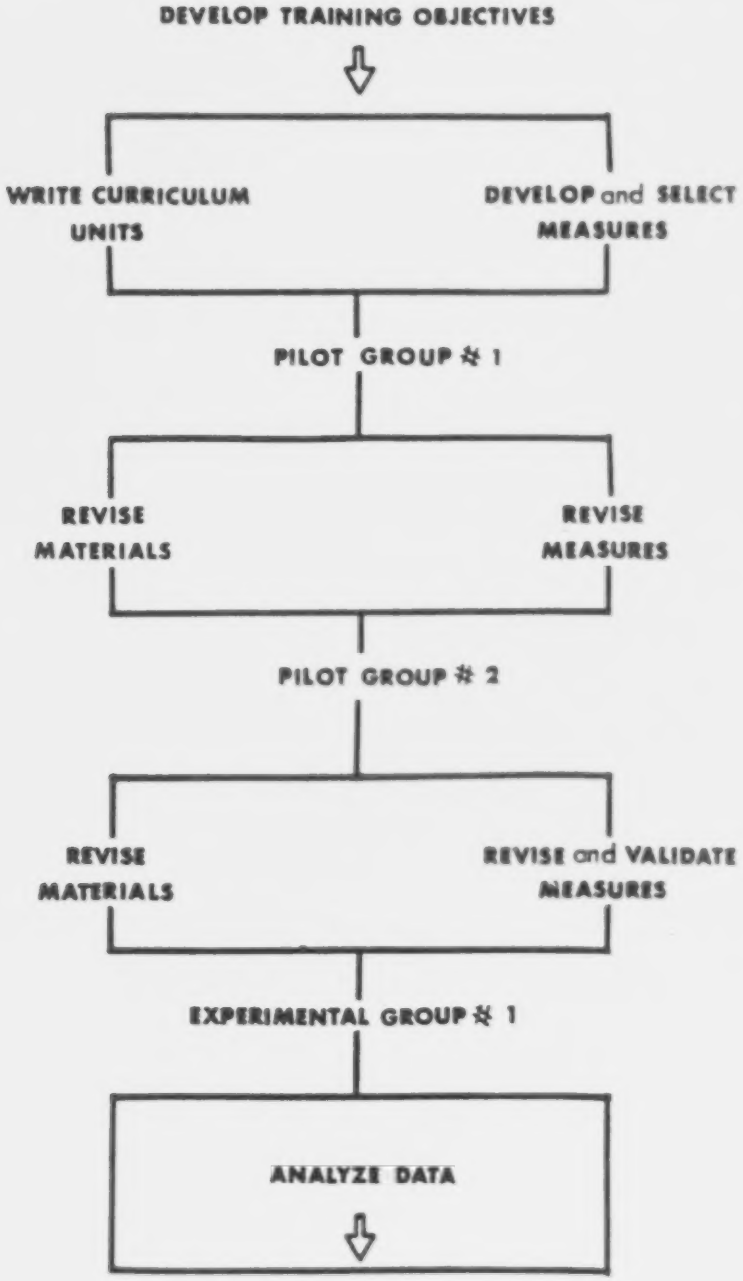

FIGURE 1

PROGRAM

DEVELOPMENT PHASE II

7/01/80 THROUGH 3/31/81

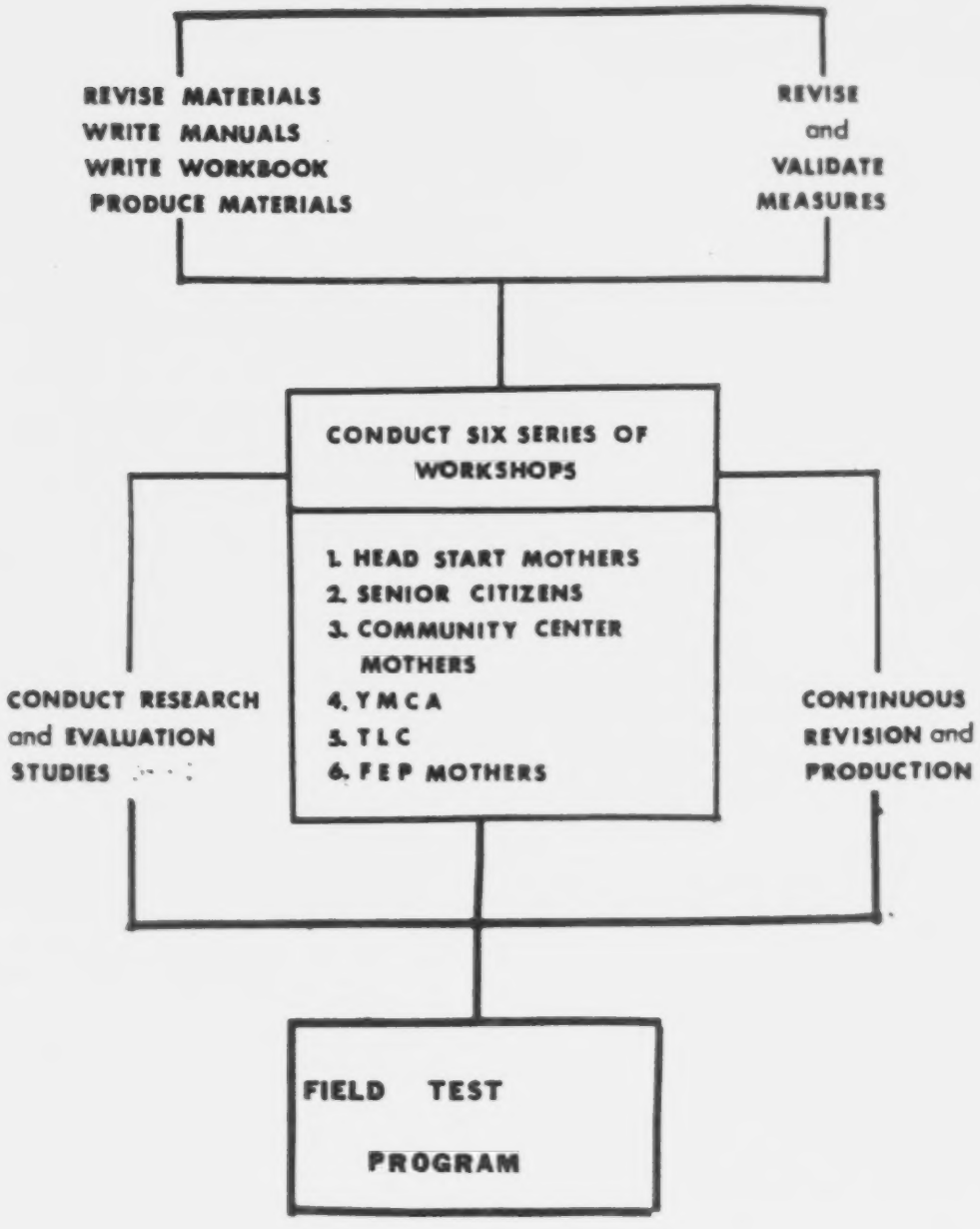

FIGURE 2

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